

**Town of New London
Recreation Commission Meeting
1/19/2010**

Present:

Allison McClain
Gerald Coogan
Keith Pomkoski, Chair
Laura James
Chad Denning, Director
Jason Stadler

The meeting was called to order by Chad Denning at 4:30 p.m.

[Previous meeting minutes were not approved]

2010 Recreation Budget: Chad Denning reports that the budget meeting have been interesting, long, drawn out, and talking about pennies for the most part. He states that Recreation was not brought up and that he feels this is a good sign that the Recreation budget is in good shape, which they are. The Elkin's project was taken out and the Selectmen put it back in and the Budget Committee didn't want it. He felt that the Elkins' people will bring it to the floor at town meeting because that is a funded grant. The entire \$25,000 CIP money was taken away. It was left open with \$1.00 in case anyone on the floor said that they wanted to add [someone]. He continues that approximately 8 other CIP Capital Improvement Groups that were also taken away, and this was part of the effort to bring the budget down to a 2% increase. The last budget meeting is in February.

Winter Wild Fundraiser Event: Chad reports that there were 86 participants and the goal was 50. Next race there will be 6 exercise science majors volunteering for the manual timing that does not conflict with school breaks. Whaleback's parking lot had more cars then when open for skiing. Allison McClain feels there should be an award or recognition for a costumes because there were some interesting costumes. Chad Denning agreed and further relates that they had overall awards. Everyone 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in their age group category got an award and almost everyone got one because he had so many categories and age groups. Other awards included gift certificates, water bottles from Omer and Bob's, Paradise Sports donated items, and Artic Dream's gift certificates. He also states that the more prizes that can be raffled off the better because more people appreciate that part. He requests that if anyone have friends or know of a way to get gift certificates that would be wonderful, especially New London so to draw people into town. He would like to find a way to get a pair of x-country skis to raffle off and to get a regular pair of skis. Chad will speak with his contacts at Whaleback. If they can help they could get recognition on the website. He continues that the Winter Wild website has more hits than the entire Town of New London default page, which shows people are very interested.

There was a 1,000 hits on the site just in the last 2 days. Allison states she wouldn't be surprised if there are more participants at the next run because she heard a lot of people talking about bring family and friends to the next run. Gerald has spoken to people that were participants and they were very enthusiastic and excited about it. Chad also states that Whaleback has been contacted like crazy since the race asking if they allow uphill on their mountain. They have since been looking into their liability insurance policy and are changing it to allow uphill on their mountain permanently. He feels this could be huge in the Valley and hopefully it will get people outside in the winter. Gerald asks [how the BOS and Jessie have reacted to all this positive news?] Chad responds that there is a little worry that the things that they are working on do not deal directly with the Town's residents. He state that this is a very common concern that he hears. The Winter Wild is a fundraiser for the Town of New London Recreation Department. He continues that if they relied on the receiving those funds from the Town within the town they would not get anywhere because it's tapping into a small population rather than having the larger population of the region help generate the money for a small recreational department. Gerald likens it to the hill climb in the fall. It's part of a regional group. Claremont, Lebanon, and New London do it and it's a regional effort. Allison suggests a banner may be appropriate that states that the event is sponsored by the Town of New London, Recreation Department which would promote the Town and address the concerns about affiliation with the Town. [Laura?] suggest shells that can be worn in all types of weather with logo to help with representation. Chad says that they have such a great logo that after events people ask if they can buy T-shirts. He agrees that something with logo for volunteers to wear at events would be great and he reminds everyone that people do have to visit the website to get information.

Winter Carnival with Colby-Sawyer: Chad reports a huge trend change. Many who are signing up are not from here, about 40% of the people signing up from out of the area, such as Derry, Nashua, Salem, Weare, and Massachusetts. It's great because it means they have to stay here and it brings money into the community, but he is afraid that they will squeeze out some of the locals that wait till the last minute and there won't be tickets left. Chad continues to say that the winter carnival in Hanover can be up to 700 people and it's mass chaos. It's too much, 350 is beautiful. Chad believes that if the numbers are exceeded by the end of this week then they should go to the vendors and say, "When we go beyond the 400 mark then we will pay you 'X' for this number of people." Then leave it open ended for a while and maybe say that are ceiling is 500 next year. Allison states that she can appreciate both sides in that being respectful and cognitive that we've got local support and it's local businesses. She also thinks it's really exciting and it's one of the goals to have a respectable or some type of program like this that brings people in and it's good for economical development. It's good for tourism in the area. The area businesses locally probably also benefit. Allison asks if there is some type of system that would be appropriate to put in place where some kind of preference for New London residents only to buy tickets, such as what ski areas do. Then it could be honestly said that a level of preference for residents was given and no one could argue that an effort wasn't put forward for residential preference if they wait until the end and tickets were no longer available. Chad agrees and says this situation didn't really come up until this year when people were signing up and many were from out of town. He thinks it's a wonderful idea for next year and it is already in place for other activities, such as swim lessons. Allison says that being consistent with all the programs is important because the people here are passing the budget and supporting it by bringing people here and helping with sponsorship. She also says that they need to be

appreciative of that and acknowledge that we have a partnership with the residents. Laura agrees with Allison and that the problem is clearly growing and it would be wonderful to maintain the citizen approach. Chad says that he will definitely do something next year as it's too late this year. Chad states that last year Jason suggested a different time slot start. He will begin working on this next week by sending e-mails to as many participants as possible to stagger start times so to avoid lines as much as possible. Chad asks for volunteers for the event. Laura states that there has been some concerns expressed about horses on the Town Green with distractions and all the things they could be injured by and if the snow wasn't deep enough there would be damage made. Chad responds that they have met a couple of times with the whole group and The Ragged Mountain snowcat will come down on Thursday before the event. The entire Green will be groomed like you would find on a mountain. There will be 6 inches of compacted snow, which is perfect for the horses. One problem is the ground is not frozen. Jessie is pushing hard for it to be on the Town Common. The field at Colby Sawyer is flat and the Town Common is not. The NESJA individuals are very confident that this is going to be a great location for them. Chad continues that if they are 100% comfortable, which they are because they like the publicity of it being front and center. He states that Richard is a little concerned because the Town Common is a very important piece to the Town and wouldn't want it to be injured in any way. Chad relates an event he attended, Winter Polo in Aspen and they groomed Wagner Park and no damage was done. The Commission relates how wonderful it is for Ragged to come down to groom and how much thanks is owed Bob Fries for all the assistance he has given the Town. [Carole] Concrete is bringing over their trailer to transport and then the New London Police Department is having detail the whole way here.

[Keith] asks about the speed skating. Chad states that Buckling Beach would be the worse place for it because of all the wind. It would blow all the snow back on the oval. If he were going to do an ice skating oval on Little Lake Sunapee he would think about the boat launch on the other side because there is no wind there. [Jason] says they believed that the ice isn't frozen there.

Bob Andrews Memorial Ice Rink: Chad begins by saying there was a great article in the newspaper and it was great publicity. The upkeep hasn't been as bad this year because it hasn't been snowing as much. Snow removal is usually the biggest issue. This year has been the most he has ever seen for use of the rink. [Keith] asks about hockey. Chad states that personally it has not been a problem. There is a sign and it is up to the parent to say something. He continues that the hockey players are usually good about using only half of the ice. Chad says that he has been flooding the rink about once a week. It has so much water that he is concerned about when it begins to melt and starts running over the sides onto Main Street. He is hesitant about adding more water so he will try to resurface it. Allison states there was a little bit of an issue over Christmas, but it was thought that there were out-of-town guests of high school aged kids monopolizing the hockey part of the ice and it was intimidating to those who wasn't playing hockey. She believed that it resolved itself. Chad responds that he finds it has been resolving itself and occasionally the police stop over there and check the warming hut for any activity. He continues that the police did find kids in there a couple of times doing things in there that they shouldn't be doing, but for the most part it has been good. Jason asks if the door had been fix and relates that he had attempted a temporary fix by putting a bungee-cord on the door because the wind takes the door. Chad states he has attempted to put something up there and with the brutal wind that comes in there and the frame broke in about 48 hours. He is still working on

repair and suggests putting in a left-handed door rather than a right-handed door. Allison states the whole operation works out great and Chad agrees.

Eagle Scout Project: Chad states that Jesse Smearld got his Eagle Scout last weekend and he thanks the Recreation Department. His [boardwalking] has been a significant improvement in the woods. Chad also relates that he has been riding his snowmobile on it to pack down the snow. The trails have been getting much use from skiers and snowshoers. Chad continues to say that Jesse's section was underwater and with all the [board walking] in there it keeps the snow up nice and high and keeps feet dry the whole way through the trail. He says many people expressed their thanks for that, but unfortunately there isn't a sign there and gets mixed up with the NLOC a lot too.

Other Business: Chad mentioned it was time or nearing time for renewing some of the recreation commissions. He wasn't sure of who exactly and will research it further because renewing has to be handled officially.

Chad asks the Commission if anyone had anything they would like to put on their agenda. He is hoping that next year they can start moving the Recreation Department forward some more. Chad states that even though they have done things on their own regardless of the budget, but believes that there are some things that need to be paid attention to, such as the building at Bucklin Beach is starting to fall apart. Gerald agreed with Chad on Bucklin Beach and suggest preliminary cost done, maybe prepared by an engineer. He believes that a plan is needed to show how the funds will be used. Chad agrees and responds that it is mentioned in the master plan. There were drawings but numbers were never attached. Gerald suggests a putting budget together with a visual. He also thinks something needs to be done in Elkins too. Chad states that the more they zero out the CIP, which this is the second year in a row, we're will stall the projects out long term at \$25,000 a year. That was our money for next year. Chad continues to say that they have to do that kind stuff that that he's talking about so that next year they can say, "We need that money. We have a plan for it." The next item is the skate board park and it's status. The Skate Board Park Committee is planning to come to the us, the Recreation Department, to ask for some of those funds for their skate board park. If we done have a need for that money right away or we don't know how much it's going to costs then they will asked us what we are doing with the money. We need to earmark it and make sure that plan is set in motion.

Skate Board Park: Gerald asks about the status of the skate board park. Chad states that they have gone to the School Board about facilities and they have stalled them because they do not have a specific location that they like personal at this particular school district right now because they are working on their own master plan for Kearsarge Learning Center, the KLC. They are not sure what they are doing yet with the property. So the project is stalled. [male voice] asks if other areas were looked at. Chad states that they have looked at many other areas. The School District is by far the best and the only other options are to use some of the current field in the very back that is leased by the Outing Club, and further relates that the ball field that is there is full size baseball field and there isn't a group that uses it. Chad says that they could easily take a part of the outfield and use it for a skate board park, but that would also bring the Outing Club into the conversation, which there was a specific statement made that they do not want to have

anything to do with this. Gerald asks who made the statement? Chad states that was brought through Jim Wheeler and if they did do it they wanted to do it on their own. The comment made was that they don't want to deal with anyone else. [Allison made a suggestion that wasn't not clear]. Chad states that they were going to talk about it at there last meeting, which was about 3 weeks ago, and he hasn't heard any thing from them. Allison states that at this point if they were looking for suggestions, recommendations, or even response that we should be promoting collaboration at all points and not take anything off the table. She feels that it could be that opportunity to have something that is solid and that people are reaching for that many groups can come and support. Chad agrees. [Gerald] asks if the Skate Board Park has it's own committee we are in the background? Chad says that is correct. The Town will assume the liability on the project and the Town will take over the ownership and upkeep of the project, and he believes that is the actual part that stalled out whenever we started going into other options because.... [Gerald] states he wouldn't want to see the Recreational Department to get caught in the middle of it whether The Outing Club [remainder of the comment was unclear]. Chad responds that the School District will make that called because they (The Outing Club) have leased it and they will make the call and get back to them. Chad states that the Little Common behind the Information booth is another option. Jessie and the Selectman are not excited about that option. Chad states that the direction of the skateboard park would be a multi-purpose park. This means trying to make it into some type of amphitheater seating area for bands and concerts down the middle and have what is called "skateable art", where it doesn't look necessarily like a skateboard park. Chad continues that the Committee is very well organized and has a great plan and even though the School District has stalled the rest of the group has continued fundraising; however, they need to have a design, a thought process and that does depend on location.

The Recreation Department spoke about thanking all the sponsors by either listing them in The Shopper or on website. Maybe a general thank-you to the Town and sponsors in general rather than singling them out for all the wonderful support.

Jason has been working on a social website on the side for the Recreational Department. It is a much more friendly atmosphere that is similar to face book rather than the business look where information, story, blogs, photos can be better utilized.

Next meeting will be Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at 4:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria M. Bassick
Recording Secretary